



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

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Take Simple Steps to Protect Your Family from Fire, Carbon Monoxide Poisoning *Smoke detectors, two ways out are 'have to haves' for households*

Frankfort, Ky. (Jan. 5, 2012) – During the winter months when families spend more time indoors and homes are heated with supplemental heat sources, fire deaths increase, according to Kentucky's State Fire Marshal William Swope.

In fact, December, January and February are the top months for home fire deaths, Swope said.

"Each year, Kentucky and other states across the nation urge citizens to take a few simple steps to prevent loss from fires," Swope said. "Working smoke alarms save lives; knowing two ways out of your house and practicing a fire escape plan with your family saves lives and, using heat sources appropriately saves lives."

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers the 10 things you can do this winter to stay safe:

- Space heaters need space; keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heaters.
- Have a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel-burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container with a lid. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- Develop and practice a home escape plan that includes two ways out of each room and an outside meeting place.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poison Prevention

The Kentucky Department of Parks is dealing with the recent loss of one of its own employees. Evelyn Welch, a Parks employee who managed the William Whitley House Historic Site in Stanford, lost her life to CO poisoning at her home in December.

Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels – such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane – burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

To stay safe, follow the safety tips provided by the NFPA:

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is

- accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel arrive.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
 - During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
 - A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
 - Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

For additional information on fire prevention and safety, visit the NFPA's website at <http://www.nfpa.org/index.asp>.

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